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COUNTRY Hungary

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SOURCE British Broadcasting Corporation

Budapest in English at 1820 EST, 17 December 1948.

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(Text)

Here is Betty Granshaw, a British girl studying in Hungary, to read you her weekly letter to her mother at home.

"Dear Mother: Thanks for your letter, dear, and do you know that I've had an avalanche of mail from home this week? A lovely long one from Uncle Bob and Jim, another from Mary, one from Jean and, of all things, even a hasty scrawl from Dad. I am so glad your Christmas is promising to be a nice one and, to let you in on a secret, Mum, don't worry about not having enough sugar for the sweets and cake for I sent you a parcel a fortnight ago containing a couple of pounds of sugar, some chocolates, two tins of canned goose liver, and some of the Hungarian salami I remember telling you about. I do hope this reaches you in time for the holiday.

"Oh, Mum, I forgot to mention in my last letter that the radio here broadcast a program of light music yesterday which was relayed by the BBC. (Editor's Note: Monitors believe that the voice announcing this light music program was that of "Betty Granshaw".) I do hope you caught sight of it in the Radio Times and managed to listen in. I wasn't at the University since I have a slight chill and there was only one lecture on which I should have attended, so I listened to the program which included some light tunes by Hungarian composers and some very good folk music. Since the program was relayed by the BBC for their 'Going Places' series, the announcer welcomed listeners to Budapest and gave a picture of the city during the Christmas season. Before I forget, I read in a magazine that another of these broadcasts is being planned for the 13th of January, 1130 to 1200 AM British time, so do make a note of it and listen in and write and tell me what you think of it.

"Oh, dear! I am almost forgetting to put your fears at rest with regard to my spending a lonely Christmas. You certainly need not worry. As a matter of fact, the number of invitations I have received made me laugh. Five in all. It was hard to decide where to go and still harder to refuse without offending the people who invited me. Well, to give you my detailed schedule, I am spending Christmas Eve with the Horvaths, Jane Burton's friends. You see, the Kovacs will be going to their mother's then, so I'll be with them on Christmas Day for lunch and dinner, and on Boxing Day I'm having lunch at Esther's and dinner at

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Ilonka's, both University friends.

"As I have already written, here the tree is lit and presents distributed on Christmas Eve anywhere between 5 and 8 PM. The kids are told that baby Jesus brings the presents, a little bell is tinkled to herald his arrival, and then children and grownups troop in to where the lighted tree stands with the presents laid around it.

"After gifts have been unwrapped, admired, and played with, comes the family dinner and plenty of good cheer. I am so glad I'm spending the evening at a place where there are kids. You know the Horvaths have three, two boys of 10 and 8 to whom I teach English, and a darling little mite of four.

"Though it's long past my bedtime, I must write you a few words on shopping and the Christmas atmosphere here. To begin with, shopping hours have been lengthened and shops are open until 6 instead of the usual 5. Also, here it is the custom for shops to be open on the Sunday preceding Christmas. That certain Christmas bustle is to be noticed in the streets here for the past 10 days. Most women are loaded down with parcels and people in general hurry on, in and out of shops, window shopping, etc. The sweetest group are the children, who stand and gaze at the toy shop windows, where all their dreams come true are on display and at reasonable prices. It's good to see the shop windows and shelves inside stocked with goods and everything is to be had, and I must confess for me, it's still the delicatessen stores with their luscious hams, sausages, canned goods, cheeses, goose liver, fruits, chocolates, etc., which hold the greatest attraction.

"Oh! Before closing we had the loveliest, our second, snowfall yesterday, and it looks as if our blanket of snow will last until Christmas.

"Mother dear, my love to you, Father and Jim. A very merry Christmas to you all. Plenty of presents. You may be sure I'll be thinking of you especially hard on Christmas morning. A hug and kisses, Your daughter, Betty"

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